

INTERchange

Employee Newsletter



May 1992

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Help Yourself: tips on stress control, quiet time, ergonomics, low-fat snacks, night driving and much more.

Adopt A Highway Underway

Earth Day enthusiasts, spring cleaners and anyone else with an urge to tidy now have ample opportunity, thanks to MDT.

In fact, about 7,000 miles of highway are eligible for litter cleanup under the department's Adopt A Highway program, which officially kicked off April 22 at the Capitol.

The effort was spurred mainly by people who had seen similar programs in neighboring states, said Dennis Unsworth, Chief of the Public Affairs Bureau.

Like programs in Washington and Wyoming, the state's Adopt A Highway program will recognize its participants with signs posted on either side of the adopted highway. The signs also include a "workers ahead" notice on a hinge for safety reasons.

"If volunteers don't clean up, in some cases we do it, and the cost can be pretty high," Unsworth said. "That's how we justify the cost of the signs."

The Montana Association of Counties adopted the first section, on I 15 either side of Helena's Cedar Street Interchange. Dozens of other organizations also have agreed to participate, Unsworth said.

MDT requires volunteers to clean their area—which must be a minimum two-mile stretch—at least three times a

year. In addition, participants must have completed a safety checklist and must have water and a first-aid kit available while working.

The state provides orange safety vests and trash bags that it will pick up when the cleaning is done. Groups can keep any recyclables they find.

Story and photo © 1992 Independent Record



MDT employees put up signs along I 15, including signs that fold open to alert motorists of volunteers at work.

Director's Column



or the Public Affairs staff takes care of.

But that's not the case. We all share an important role in public affairs—to represent the department in a positive way to the public we're in contact with every day.

The public image of the department reflects not only the policies and actions of the department as a whole, but each individual within the department. As a result, a sense of pride in the work we do for the greater good of the state and its citizens must be the basis of our public affairs program.

I've commented before on the im-

I've got a hunch many of us think of public relations and the department's public "image" as someone else's job—something the District Engineer, the Director

portance of service, what I like to call customer service. Each of us is responsible for promoting the department in that regard, both in our personal and professional lives. The willingness of each person to take an active role in public affairs, to make suggestions, to care, and to take pride in ourselves, in our department, and in each other is encouraged and welcomed—an important part of our program.

Of course, the public image of the department results not only from our ability to serve the transportation needs of the state, but from our ability to serve the needs of each employee. And that's an important assignment as well;

- developing effective programs and policies,
- providing optimum working conditions and opportunities for personal and professional growth,
- enhancing a sense of optimism and good will within the workplace, and
- feeling good about the job each of us performs.

Our success, in turn, affects the way we are perceived by our friends and neighbors and the citizens of this state. It's also reflected in the actions of the various governing bodies in Montana—the way we're treated by the legislature, for instance.

The District Engineers represent the Department of Transportation in their districts. They serve as the visible presence of the department. And the Public Affairs Office serves as the resource office, working with the press, providing a long-range public affairs plan and improving communication of the department's strengths both within the department and throughout the state.

But you're still in many ways the most important ingredient, representing the department in daily contacts with the people we're in business to serve. I encourage you to accept this role, if you haven't already. It'll give you a new perspective on your work and we benefit individually and collectively.

Miracle on Van Orsdel Road

Whether divine act, quick-thinking teamwork or a combination, "miracle" was a common description of an MDT employee's recent near-death experience.

Mike Mullings of the Materials Bureau was working under his mini-van at home on Saturday, March 7, when the four jacks under the axle and frame slipped and the vehicle fell on him.

According to Mullings, doctors said his backbone was pressed against his heart and it stopped beating. Then, his blood and body fluids rushed to his head causing his upper body to turn bright, sunburned red and blood to flow from his mouth and nose.

Mullings neighbor, Jim Miller, was just leaving his house when 13-year-old Amy Mullings caught his attention.



Mike Mullings and his family gather in their Helena Valley home just three days after the accident. From left to right: daughter, Tracy Mullings, 10; wife, ReNee Mullings; daughter Amy Mullings, 13; and Mike Mullings.

Miller grabbed his high-lift car jack and raced over to the accident. He arrived just seconds before his neighbor Lee Topash, an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and state employee. As soon as

Topash and Miller got the van off of Mullings, his heart started beating.

The ambulance crew arrived at the scene and found the car removed and Mullings unconscious and bleeding.

Mullings was rushed to the Emergency Room at St. Peters Hospital and later transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. Doctors told ReNee Mullings, Mike's wife, to expect brain damage.

By 5 pm that day, Mullings had regained consciousness. His heart rhythm returned to normal the next morning, and his intensive radiographic testing showed no internal damage. If it had taken much longer to remove the vehicle, Mullings was told, he would have suffered severe brain damage or even death.

See Miracle, page 8

National Transportation Road Race Afoot

Montana's National Transportation Week Road Race will be Wednesday, May 20 at 4:30 pm.

Courses for the one-mile walk/run, five-kilometer race and 10-kilometer race will be the same as previous years, ending at the MDT headquarters in Helena.

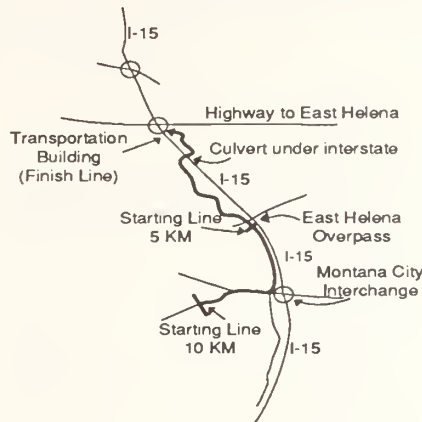
The deadline for the \$1 registration fee refund is May 13, but applications will be accepted until the day of the race. All applications should be submitted with a registration form to Kris Wahl, Accounting Services Bureau in the Administration Division. Pre-registration is encouraged.

Registration is open to the public; however, MDT employees will be competing against the times of transportation departments from other states.

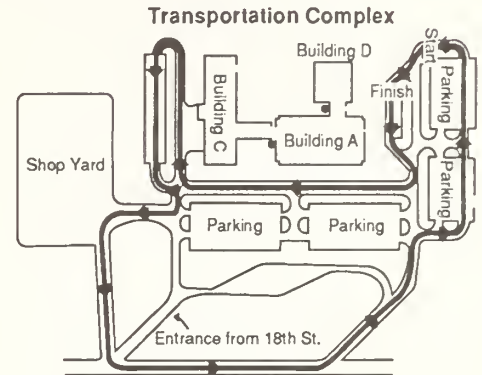
Runners are encouraged to organize three-member teams to challenge other teams. All team member must run the same distance. There is no additional cost for team registration, and forms should be submitted together.

Certificates will be awarded to the top three men and women finishers of each category at a 5:30 pm awards ceremony the day of the race. Certificates will be awarded to first-place teams in each category, and all participants will receive a ribbon.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help, contact a member of the race committee: Jim Lewis (6095); Jean Bond (6046); Kris Wahl (6028); Carol Bondy (6026); Annette Stockdale (7217); Sandy Waddell (6201); Mike Lynch (6294); Rex Hoy (6270); or Tim Cail (6312).



Five-km and 10-Km Course



One-Mile Walk/Run Course

Entry Form

Name _____ Age _____ Entry Fee \$1.00

Office _____ Office Phone _____

City _____ Team Name (if applicable) _____

Race: One-mile walk/run _____ Five km. _____ 10 km. _____

Waiver of responsibility: In consideration of the acceptance of this entry, I hereby release the sponsors and organizers from any claim for damages or injuries suffered by me as a result of my participation in this event, and waive any claim I might have against the sponsors and organizers for damages arising out of, or in any way relating to, my voluntary participation in this event.

Signature _____ Guardian (if under 18) _____

Send completed entry form along with entry fee to *Race Committee, Attn: Kris Wahl, Accounting Services Bureau, Administration, Department of Transportation, Helena, MT 59620.* Please submit by May 13, 1992. Entry fees will not be refunded after May 13.

Excellent Response to Strategic Plan Survey

Response to the strategic planning survey was excellent, according to Ron Mester, the department's consultant.

Surveys were received from almost half of the department's employees, 20 percent of the 2,000 "customers" surveyed and more than 15 percent of the random sample of Montana residents. This kind of response, Mester said, exceeds what is normally expected from such surveys.

Mester tabulated the responses and is currently analyzing the results, which will be available to all department employees this summer.

The survey, according to Sandy Straehl, MDT coordinator, will be used to:

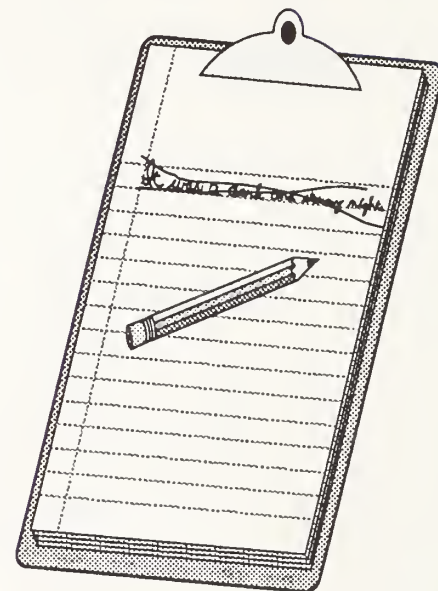
- define the department's key roles and responsibilities;
- identify the department's strengths and weaknesses;
- discover what criteria customers use to judge the department's success; and
- determine if we see ourselves in the same way as our customers.

While Mester's firm analyzes the results, in-house employees will collect data to identify trends affecting the department.

Results from the trends analysis and the survey will lead to the development of department-wide goals, strategic initiatives and a mission statement, Straehl said.

Eight Ways to Improve Your Writing:

- ✎ *Get to the point*—in the first sentence or paragraph.
- ✎ Use I, we, our, you, yours, and me in your writing. In fact, *make an effort to use personal pronouns*. They're more relaxing and conversational—for you and the reader. (In fact, readable writing laws require them.)
- ✎ Use *contractions* (can't, I'll, you're). We use them when we talk, don't we?
- ✎ Use *short, simple words*. They're more concise, more precise, more easily understood. In Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, 70 percent of the words are five letters or less.
- ✎ Write *short sentences and paragraphs*. Let your reader take a breath (mental and physical) often! Don't write a telegram necessarily, but keep your writing tight and to the point. Long, windy sentences are confusing. Long paragraphs are difficult to get through.
- ✎ Use *direct questions*. Ask a question when there's an opportunity and your writing will sound more like talk, ok? It shouldn't hurt, should it?
- ✎ Be *open-minded about punctuation*. Read your writing out loud to get a feel for flow and rhythm, and check your reference books, such as the department's *Readable Writing Handbook*. Whatever you do, be consistent.
- ✎ Allow *your own style to show* in your writing. A personal style helps make writing more personal—and that's what readers want. Write it like you'd say it. We like to read letters that sound like they were written by people, not computers. Just don't get too folksy. Be personal and professional.



Writing tips courtesy of Dennis Unsworth, Public Affairs Bureau Chief and the course "Writing that Works."

Happenings at MDT

Service Awards

Service awards were presented in the following categories:

30 years

Arnold G. Blair, Donald R. Taylor, Thomas V. West.

25 years

Charles W. Chambers, Harold E. Hoffman, Eugene W. Redli, James R. Roan, Thomas C. Weiss.

20 years

Franklin B. Asbury, Lee E. Beatty.

15 years

Vernon R. Baldry, Dan S. Clary, Benjamin W. Dean, Robert D. Fisher, Ronnie A. Haraseth, Michael D. Klette, Gary Lee Montgomery, Gary L. Nelson, Deborah Niehoff, Richard J. Reynolds, Jayne L. Rogers, David E. Wall, Terry L. Whindom.

10 years

Regina L. Applegate, David L. Cromwell, Jerry L. Francisco, Terry L.

McDonald, Jack W. Peaslee, Duane G. Snyder, E. Bill Williams.

5 years

Kevin C. Baisch, John S. Butorovich, Kenneth Clark, Stephen R. German, Wade D. Hasler, Michael S. Huber, Arthur S. Jacobsen, Brian N. Jones, Arthur C. Krantz, Jr., Linda R. Kroll, Steve D. Lane, Jr., Charles A. Matteson, Joseph C. O'Neil, Barron D. Parks, Klayton John Rogge, Scott Walimaa, Joseph M. Walsh, Murdo P. Wilson, Donna L. Wisher.

Retirements

30 years or more of service with state government:

Clarence Swanson, Supervisor Core Drill, Billings, 36 years, 5 months.

Dale Hecock, Field Supervisor A, Big Sandy, 35 years, 7 months.

Duane Strohmayer, Field Project Manager, Miles City, 35 years, 3 months.

Robert Champion, Deputy Director, Helena, 34 years, 3 months. Other – 1 year.

Allan Allsop, Shop Superintendent, Bozeman, 33 years, 2 months.

Delmar Lemons, Maintenance Superintendent, Missoula, 30 years, 4 months.

Douglas Fandrich, Designer III, East Helena, 30 years, 1 month.

Jacob Liebelt, Administrative Assistant IV, Havre, 30 years, 1 month.

Longevity honors for 20-plus years:

Kenneth Katana, Field Supervisor A, Custer, 28 years, 3 months.

Thomas Davis, Field Supervisor A, Bigfork, 22 years, 10 months.

John Kane, Chief Field Maintenance, Butte, 22 years, 1 month.

Jack Barisich, Field Supervisor A, Winnett, 20 years, 10 months.

Honors for 10-plus years

Hilbert Schultz, Equipment Operator II, Lewistown, 19 years, 3 months.

Four Secrets of Walking for Weight Loss

The strongest part of the human body is the legs.

The weakest? That nodule in the brain in charge of resisting cookies and potato chips.

Therein lies **Secret #1** of successful weight loss:

Through walking you can substitute walkpower for willpower.

Secret #2: Because the legs are so strong, walking seems easy, and it *is* easy. But because we're moving the entire weight of our body with every stride, the energy expenditure over a period of time is much more substantial than a furious bout of sit-ups. So walking burns *more* fat with *less* effort.

Secret #3: You don't have to get psyched up to go for a walk. You don't even have to get dressed up. So it's easier to insert walking into your daily schedule than almost any other exercise. That translates into a regular routine, and in turn, weight loss.

Secret #4: Walking is a backlash-free sport. No other calorie burning, fitness-promoting activity can make that statement. Injuries are one form of backlash: knee pain or backache from running; or twisted ankles and pulled muscles from aerobics. But outright injuries are only one kind of backlash. There's also burn-out: a sense of physical and mental weariness from month after month of high-exertion sports like weight lifting, lap swimming or running.

None of these should bother the walker. Injuries are rare, and fatigue should never accumulate unless you're pushing far too hard.

All this means that your walking regimen should have a strong chance of holding up, giving you endless chances to burn calories.

The Math of Walking

Walking one mile will burn up approximately 100 calories. A brisk walker covers that mile in approximately 15 minutes. An easy-to-moderate walker

covers it in 20 minutes. So you can walk three to four miles in an hour.

Let's say you walk at an easy-to-moderate pace for 45 minutes. You'd be covering two and a quarter miles, at 100 calories per mile. So your total calorie burn for the walk will be $2.25 \times 100 = 225$ calories burned. Do that for 30 days and you've walked away 30×225 calories = 6,750 calories. Figuring that 3,500 calories equal one pound, you will have lost close to two pounds, which adds up to about 22 pounds less body fat after a year.

But let's say you up your pace to a 15-minute mile. Then what do you get from walking 45 minutes a day? You burn 300 calories (3 miles \times 100 calories). Over the course of a week you burn 2,100 calories. Over 52 weeks, you burn 109,200 calories. Divide that by 3,500 and you get a total weight loss of over 30 pounds.

The Mind-Set of Walking

But far more important than the math of walking is the psychology. As you gathered from the figures, the benefit of walking is measured in months, not days.

Don't be discouraged. Tell yourself these facts, over and over again:

- I'm better off losing weight slowly. The more gradual the weight loss, the more likely it is to be permanent.

- Losing weight gradually gives my body and appetite time to adjust to my new lower weight.

- By losing gradually, I'm preventing the baggy skin that could result if I lost more rapidly.

- This is the healthiest way to trim down. I don't have to cut back on good nutrition. I don't need diet pills. And all the weight I'm losing is fat. (People who lose weight by dieting lose lots of muscle tissue, as well as fat.)

So, even though I'm losing weight more slowly than a strict dieter, I'm way ahead of the game!

Back Again

Back injuries are the major cause of workers' compensation claims at MDT. The average back injury costs about \$9,242.* Analysis of first injury reports shows the primary cause to be a general lack of conditioning—not lifting heavy objects. The following exercises from *Safety and Health* magazine are very useful and timely. Please read and heed. **Exercise Your Right to Back Safety.** These simple exercises can help keep your back balanced by supporting its three natural curves: cervical (neck), thoracic (middle back) and lumbar (lower back).

Low Back Stretch – Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Grasp one knee and slowly bring it up to your chest. Hold this position for five counts, relax and repeat five times. Repeat this motion with your other leg.

Wall Slides – Stand with your back against a wall and your feet 12 inches apart. Slide down into a crouch and keep you back against the wall. Hold for five counts; slide up with your back still against the wall. Repeat.

"Mad Cat" – Get on all fours, inhale deeply and arch you back upward. Hold the position and exhale deeply. Relax, then inhale and bend your back downward. Hold that position and exhale deeply.

Diagonal Reach – Get on your hands and knees. Slowly reach one arm out in front of you and extend the opposite leg straight behind you. Hold this position for five seconds; switch sides.

Remember, stop any exercise that causes you pain or discomfort. If you want more information about back exercises, call the Organizational Development Bureau at 444-6054.

* based on national averages
Courtesy of Organizational
Development Bureau, MDT

Stress

Busters

Some of these stress reducing ideas might work for you.

- Get up 15 minutes earlier.
- Prepare for each morning the night before.
- Make duplicates of all keys.
- Take an exercise break, change your focus or change the scene.
- Take advantage of off-hours for banking and shopping.
- Don't put up with anything that doesn't work properly.
- Take six deep breaths.
- Unclutter your life. Get rid of things you never use.

Food for Thought

Don't ever be afraid to admit you were wrong. It's like saying you're wiser today than you were yesterday.

Looking for a Low-Fat Snack?



Try:

- Pretzels
- Air-popped popcorn
- Rice cakes
- Bagels – plain or with jelly
- Cereal – Cheerios, Fruit Wheats, Kix
- Apples/Oranges/Bananas
- Celery/Carrot strips
- Gumdrops
- Hard candy
- Graham crackers (one or two)

Manager's Corner

Interrupted? Try a "quiet hour." The rules of a quiet hour are:

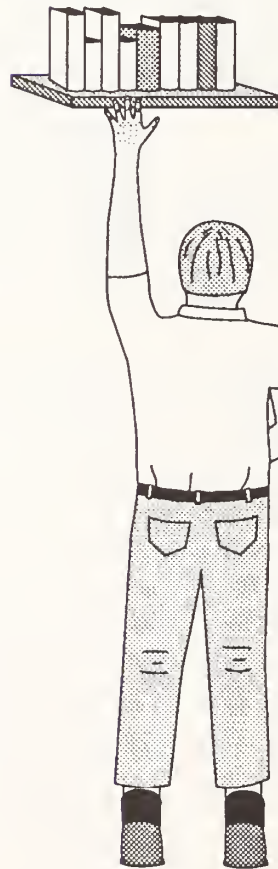
1. No phone calls.
2. No visitors.
3. No leaving the office to see anyone, except for emergencies.

Try a sign on the door or work area to enforce your "quiet time."

Bloopers in the Future?

We would like to start a section entitled "The Bloopers of the Month" that features one preventable accident and ways it could have been avoided. The district, area and names of people involved will all be omitted. If you have *any* objections to this feature please contact Theresa Cash at 444-6054.

Ergonomics For All



Even if your job involves no repetitive motions, such as typing, you may be able to improve your at-work mood and your productivity. Follow these simple tips:

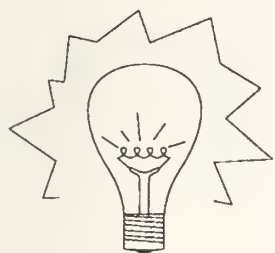
- Adjust your work station so you can comfortably reach all your work materials and equipment without awkward twisting or bending motions.
- If you're desk-bound, adapt your desk and chair to fit your size and shape. Use your breaks to stretch, exercise and relax.
- Concentrate on strengthening your back. Work on strengthening the muscles responsible for the actions opposite of your repetitive motions. For instance, typists should try spreading their fingers apart and flexing their hands, reversing their daily fingers-down pose.
- Exercise on your own, outside of work.

More Food for Thought

It's not so much how busy you are, but *why* you are busy. The bee is praised. The mosquito is swatted.

– Marie O'Connor

Bright Ideas



You are an expert at the job you do. We've heard many good ideas from experts who know how to work smarter and safer. If you have a suggestion or an idea that makes your work easier or safer call 444-6054 or send your ideas to the Organizational Development Bureau. We'll publish your ideas in the *Help Yourself* along with your name (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).

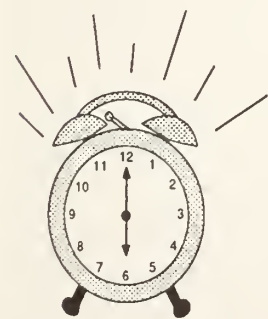
Is Anyone Listening?

Do you have trouble hearing or just listening?

Successful listeners are people who:

- Listen intently.
- Repress their own egos.
- Don't interrupt.
- Are patient.
- Are concerned.

Which Side Of the Bed Did You Wake Up On This Morning?



Bad manners make otherwise pleasant offices unbearable. The five commonly voiced gripes about office manners: Does anyone you know...

- Start the day with a request (or demand) rather than with a cheerful hello?
- Interpret an open door as an invitation to walk in and sit down?
- Leave the office without telling anyone of their whereabouts?
- Throw or drop crumpled paper on the floor for the janitors to clean up?
- Assume that paychecks are enough, and that there's no necessity to say thank you for jobs done.

Are **you** the office grouch...?

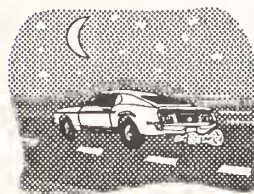
Lighten Up

Don't sit so sunlight from a window shines on your computer. If you do, you'll get distracted and have weary eyes from the reflection on your terminal screen. A window at the left or right would serve you better.

Even More Food for Thought

It would take six monuments the size of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington to accommodate the engraved names of tobacco victims during a single year. - Robert Sack, NY lawyer

Some Tips for Night Drivers



- Make sure mirrors and windshields are clean.
- Whenever you stop for gas, wipe off headlights and taillights.
 - Don't drink and drive.
 - Don't smoke in the car. Cigarette smoke produces a film on the windshield and also increases adaptation time to darkness and recovery from glare.
 - Have regular eye checkups.
 - Slow down so you don't "overdrive" your headlights.
 - Dim your dashboard lights to help you see the road better.

Employee's Corner

How to prepare for your next promotion:

- Take time to plan.
- Learn more about the company as a whole.
- Visit libraries.
- Collect ideas.
- Develop technical skills.
- Attend training courses.
- Use spare time wisely.

Missoula District

By Bonnie Sedita

The Missoula District Excellence Awards for 1991 go to:

Jack May, Working Shop Foreman: In addition to being a great mechanic, Jack is recognized for a strong work ethic and encouraging others to have the same commitment to their jobs and work quality.

Gene Piedalue, Field Project Manager: Gene is recognized for his long-term dedication and commitment to the department. He's recognized as an outstanding project manager whose opinions and ideas are valued.

Andy Bloom, Kalispell Carpenter: Andy was recommended and selected for his positive attitude and enthusiasm. He often works through lunch and does extra hours without compensation. His resourcefulness and conscientious approach to stretching the state dollar are commended.

Bonnie Sedita, Personnel Specialist: Thanks to Bonnie's knowledge of civil rights requirements, the Missoula District has one of the best postures in the state regarding civil rights programs. She received special commendation for her work with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe and the establishment of

the surveying and truck driver training courses at the Salish-Kootenai College.

The Plains Crew: Leonard Larson, Monte Makin, Brian Jones and John Holland are recognized for their pride and commitment to excellence. Of special note is the quality of their patches, which look like they were laid with a paver. They are also commended for their participation in community organizations.

Bob Todd, District Materials Supervisor: Bob guides the Missoula and Kalispell labs. All work was completed on schedule in compliance with rapidly changing rules and regulations.

Miracle, from page 2

"As it turns out," Mullings said, "my only ding was a small bruise on my rib."

Mullings went home on Monday afternoon—just two days after the accident, and returned to work on Thursday, March 26.

A part of the miracle was Helena's Emergency Medical System (EMS), according to Ray Brown, EMT responding to the call and Chief of MDT's Civil Rights Bureau. "Our whole team effort worked for Mike," Brown said. "From the sheriff's department to the ambulance crew to St. Peter's Hospital Emergency Room Team—everyone was in the right place at the right time."

Mullings said he has much to be thankful for, including his co-workers, supervisor and bureau chief. His co-workers willingly shouldered his workload, said Jim Walther, Chief of the Materials Bureau, and his schedule was modified to accommodate his recovery.

At the request of Mrs. Mullings, Walther and Ron Banks, of the Materials Bureau, checked the mini-van, took the jacks off and lowered the van to the ground to avoid further accidents. Both men noted only two to three inches between the bottom of the van and the top of the ground.

Currently, Mullings says he's "completely through with medical follow-ups" and is grateful to be alive.

"Even though it was a terrible thing to happen," Mullings said, "I'm glad for what it can do for other people—I'm humbled that they can see God at work."

Others involved with the incident described it as miraculous and suggested his amazing recovery was a tribute to human resilience and quick-thinking teamwork.

This story is the result of interviews with Mike Mullings, Ray Brown, Jim Walther, and material from the Independent Record.



Cartoon courtesy of Kevin Beckstrom, UDOT.

In the back of the Materials Testing Lab is a small room no one ever talks about—
The Materials Tasting Lab.

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Employee Newsletter

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Public Affairs Bureau staff:
Dan Bartsch
Jeannie Huntley, *Interchange* Editor
Rich Munger
Sean Seville
Kristen Torgerson
Dennis Unsworth

The following contributed articles for this issue:

The Organizational Development Bureau
Bonnie Sedita
Sandy Strahl

Submissions and correspondence should be addressed to:

Public Affairs Bureau
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-6200